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# EUROPE IN TRANSFORMATION.

BY ARCHIBALD R. COLQUHOUN.

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To the student of history and politics there is something specially fascinating about the perennial youthfulness of the European continent. This is, of all regions of the world, the one in which fresh elements and unforeseen developments are always arising; and, side by side with institutions which date from the days of remote antiquity, it exhibits continually unmistakable signs of youth and vitality. That this view of a continent which they are wont to respect chiefly on account of its hoary age will surprise some Americans I am well aware; but the majority of them, who visit Europe chiefly for the sake of the past, are, perhaps, not sufficiently interested in present history to form a just estimate. I shall endeavor to justify my opinion by giving an impression of the great movements which, at the present moment, are casting Europe once again into the melting-pot, and thus showing that she is capable of renewing her youth indefinitely.

In the first place, we find that, despite the assimilating and levelling tendencies which are at work throughout the world obliterating the landmarks of race, Europe is still the home of those fresh and primitive emotions known as national pride and racial sympathy. It is becoming increasingly fashionable to decry these sentiments; and to the denizen of the United States, who sees all races fusing beneath the Stars and Stripes, there must be something strange in the mutual jealousies and rivalries of the same races in their European homes. Europe is more youthful than America in this. She exhibits the individualism of the nursery and schoolroom rather than the studied collectivism of adult life, in which peculiarities of character and taste are concealed by education. This individualism has proved too strong for more than one conqueror who desired to form a United States of Europe.

Charles V in the sixteenth century, Louis XIV in the seventeenth and Napoleon in the nineteenth, failed to obliterate the boundaries of European states and combine them into one empire. One of the great reasons for these failures is the fact that Europe was, (and is) sharply divided as to race, although a process of fusion has been going on for so many centuries.

I am aware that it is no longer considered scientifically accurate to attempt an ethnical division of the races of the world, except on such a fundamental basis as the shape of the skull, but in speaking of "races" in Europe to-day one is bound to adopt a linguistic distinction. Modern Europe contains many fragments of ancient peoples whose languages are distinct from those by which they are surrounded, but broadly speaking, if we take language as the distinguishing feature, there are in modern Europe three great families. These are the Slavs in Central and Eastern Europe (whose influence extends through the Balkan peninsula and is to be found even in Greece), the Teutonic peoples of Northern and Central Europe, and the Latin-speaking races of Italy, France and the Spanish peninsula. Great Britain is a conglomerate, in which the original stock of these islands has been overlaid by successive conquests. After the decay of the Roman Empire the Teutons swarmed over Europe; and even in the central portions, already occupied by the Slavs, they established a political domination. They displaced the Latins in Northern Italy and spread even to Spain. By degrees, however, they were absorbed by those they had conquered in Spain, Gaul and Italy, and the purely Teutonic empire continued to have its centre on the Rhine. The struggle between Slav and Teuton, and between Teuton and Latin, makes up the history of mediæval Europe. The Slavs were weakened by the fact that, in the tenth century, they were cut in two by the Magyars, and, later, by the subjugation of the Southern Slavs by the Turks. For long centuries they remained in thrall; and not till the nineteenth century did the Slav begin to resume the place he had formerly occupied on the European stage. During all this time, the Teuton race was expanding, checked only by the rise of a great Latin-speaking power in France. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, this power was predominant. The German-speaking nations had no political coherence; one by one, they went down before Napoleon, and the conquests of the Latin seemed as sure as in the days of Rome.

But, almost outside the European pale, a Slav power had been slowly growing; and when Napoleon, feeling his conquest incomplete without its subjugation, threw himself unsuccessfully upon Moscow and retired in such disorder, Russian national self-consciousness awoke. The Slavs owe many debts to France. The Revolution had awakened echoes throughout Europe, among the submerged Slavs as well as among the disunited Germans; French philosophy and literature were the fount of inspiration during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among the southern Slavs, their temporary inclusion in Napoleon's empire was the beginning of their national renaissance, for to counteract German influence he encouraged their indigenous languages and began a literary revival. Even the crumbling of his empire could not undo this work.

The next period—almost the whole of the nineteenth century—was the gradual apotheosis of the Teuton. The Germanic writers, philosophers and savants took the place of the French in leading the intellectual world. Prussia gradually emerged from the welter of German states, and little by little the awakening of a true national consciousness among these states led up to the events of 1866-1870 and the founding of a new empire. No period of history is more packed with youth and enthusiasm than this, unless we except '48, with its abortive but splendid revolutions. All Europe seemed to be seized with a passion of national fervor, and the Slavs shared in the general reconstruction. Servia had set up a national dynasty in 1829, but both she and Bulgaria only blossomed into full national independence in the seventies. Two other Slav kingdoms, Bohemia and Croatia, had been fighting their way slowly but surely during the whole century, not to independence, but to the recognition of their national character and the restoration of their language, and the seventies saw the first real fruition of their hopes. Greece had thrown off the Turkish yoke as early as 1830, but Hungary gained recognition as a kingdom only in 1867; and Italy, released from the German-Austrian yoke and unified under the House of Savoy, emerged as a modern kingdom in 1870. It will be seen, therefore, that, although the Teutonic races entered a new and glorious phase when the German Empire was founded, they had to deal with a very different Europe from that in which Napoleon found such an easy prey. The tendency towards consolidation was as strong as the revival

of national individualism, and indeed the latter owed much of its power to the former. Austria, for instance, lost many points of weakness in Italy, as she had already in the Low Countries, and emerged far more compact than before, a fact which, although it has not yet produced an "Austrian nation," has certainly assisted the foundation of a genuinely "Austrian" parliament. Russia helped to establish the German Empire by her attitude in the period 1866-1870, and for a time there seemed to be an alliance between those hereditary opponents, the Slavs and the Teutons. It is always necessary, however, to differentiate between the feeling of the Russian people and the attitude of the Tsar and his government. Personal friendship bound the latter to William I, even when their interests diverged; while the cultural bond between France and the Slavs has always been a strong feature in the development of the latter. The attempts of Bismarck to isolate France, and to group the states of Europe in such a way that Germany had the casting vote in any decision, was for a time successful. But he could succeed in retaining Russia's friendship only by giving her a free hand in the Balkans, and that was by no means his desire. Nominally, he did so, and he attempted, with much success, to embroil her with Austria in the Balkans; but, when Bulgaria was struggling in the folds of the Russian embrace, it was more than suspected by the Tsar that Bismarck had done what he could to checkmate Russia through his faithful henchman, Austria. Accordingly, the Slav power, little by little, inclined to an alliance with France—not without misgivings, for republican France had exercised an influence over the Russians which was by no means agreeable to the autocracy. The Russian face, however, was now turned eastward. French gold was needed, and so, at last, Eastern and Western Europe were united in the Dual Alliance as a counterpoise to the Triple Alliance of the Central European Powers.

The Triple Alliance, which has recently been renewed, was considered one of Bismarck's masterpieces, though apparently he did not place much faith in it himself, for he immediately began to attempt reinsurance by secret understandings with Russia. Austria was, and still is, bound to Germany by ties too strong to break. Italy sought security, and for a time desired revenge on France for a long series of injuries terminating in the occupation of Tunis. But she was by no means attached to either of her allies

and became an increasingly lukewarm supporter. Thus we find the Teuton and the Latin in one camp, and the Slav and the Latin in another. The pivot on which European policy has chiefly turned since the formation of these groups is that knot of mountainous country, with its renascent Slav populations, known as the Balkan Peninsula. Besides the states of Bulgaria and Servia, defined by the Berlin Treaty of 1878, there is the debatable land of Macedonia, and the intrigues of European Powers, small and great, to secure the reversion of this last remnant of Turkish power in Europe, have kept that unfortunate region in a condition of seething unrest. Here is the principal battle-field between modern Teuton and Slav, and the struggle is no less deadly because it is waged, not openly, but through diplomacy. The genuine fighting is as yet done chiefly by the Slavs among themselves, with assistance from the Greeks.

The Slavo-Teuton struggle is one of the main factors in the transformation of Europe now taking place. Despite the political conquests and the growing power of the German Empire, the wave of Teutonism seems to be rolling back, just as the Latin wave has been repelled in former days. In the summer of this year, I had an opportunity of seeing something of one aspect of that Slav revival which is likely to mean so much to Europe. It may be well, before describing it, to give some idea of the character and principal divisions of the Slav family. I am aware that it is now fashionable to decry the power of mere race on the fate and future of nations, and to ascribe their development to geo-political, rather than ethnic, influences. But, if we abandon the strictly scientific definition of "race" and content ourselves with studying the tendencies of those families of mankind which have linguistic affinities, we cannot fail to be struck with the family likeness, modified but not obliterated, which obtains even when there is no geographical connection. Evolution, both religious and political, is largely governed by these family characteristics, and in no race are they so pronounced and so persistent as among the Slavs. The Slav is the imaginative element in Europe—an imagination quite different from that of the keenly perceptive Celt or the ratiocinative Teuton. He is a dreamer, a poet, an idealist. Not for him the achievements—through a mingling of technical skill, industry and inspiration—which have given the Latins their pre-eminence in art and literature. Nor has he, like them, traditions on which

to mould himself. Of all Europeans, he is nearest to Nature, to the primitive man, and to the soil which he adores. His virtues are his patience, persistency, and a kind of dogged courage; his greatest fault is a lack of that supreme self-belief which is so necessary to success. The Slav is self-conscious, like a child; he knows his own weakness and too often accepts it fatally, even while he may deceive others about it. His political tendencies are communistic, and he is curiously lacking in initiative, organization and concentration. He is a better follower than leader. The Slav peoples have long been unequally matched against the practical, if philosophical, Teutons, but by sheer weight of racial tenacity and persistency they are now bearing back their former conquerors. A word must be said here as to the peculiarities of the national movement in Russia. For political purposes it pleased the Tsar Alexander III to make the words "Slavophil" and "anti-European" synonymous. He and those who have followed him strove to crush down those truly national movements from below for freedom and liberty of conscience, by representing them as the bastards of Europe and no true product of Russian soil. In short, they have attempted to reverse the policy of Peter the Great and some of his successors (who wished to make Russia an European state) by emphasizing her Oriental character. By so doing they hope to prevent the incursion of those liberal tendencies which are playing so great a part in modern Europe. That this view of "Pan-Slavism" and "Slavophilism" was not always current it is needless to say. Bulgaria and Servia were encouraged by pan-Slavonic societies in Russia, and a network of these societies has spread through all the Slav countries. It would seem natural that Russia should take a foremost place in the Slav revival in Europe, but, unfortunately, her policy was so obviously selfish that, between 1878 and 1885, she succeeded in alienating from her all the liberated Balkan States. Her action in Bulgaria, particularly, was so aggressive that it resulted in stimulating the national consciousness to an extraordinary degree. Moreover, the "nationalism" and "Slavophilism" of Alexander III, which he translated into a desire to "Russianize" both in political and religious life, led him to a fierce repression of all his non-Russian subjects, and the treatment of the Poles could not fail to arouse sympathy among the newly liberated Slavs of the south. Consequently, the Russo-Japanese war and the subsequent preoccupation

of Russia with internal troubles, although they weakened the Slav race as a whole and gave fuller play to German ambitions, have not been regarded as an unmixed evil by the smaller Slav nations, any more than they were deplored by many within the empire itself. Despite the apparent reaction there is no doubt that the weakening of the autocracy by the Japanese victories has helped forward the day when the Russian people will achieve their emancipation, and step by step they are moving forward towards the goal of constitutional government. In Russia the transformation is coming from below; slowly but surely it comes—the hands of the clock cannot be permanently held fast. In their neighbor, Austria, the influence of the Slavs has been largely instrumental in securing representative government, and each section of the race is gradually but surely improving its position.

As a political propaganda Pan-Slavism has been of little use in forwarding this consummation, but as an instrument for quickening national sentiment it has been all-powerful. Mutual jealousies and ancient feuds separate the different branches of the Slavs. They are grouped by their linguistic variations into three families—Russians, Poles and Czechs, and Southern Slavs. Despite dialectical differences, the languages spoken by the members of these three groups are substantially the same, and, as I had an opportunity of testing for myself, a common Slav origin makes it possible for the educated of all these families to communicate with each other. The educated Montenegrin, who speaks the same language (practically) as the Servian, Bulgarian or Croatian, can make himself understood by the Bohemian or the Russian; and the Czech, although he may not know the Cyrillic character in which Russian is written, can also get along with the Russian or Bulgarian. The principal organization for keeping these people in touch is a system of gymnastic societies, known as *Sokols*, from the falcon's feather worn in the caps of the members. Branches numbering over a thousand are established in all Slav countries, and in communities of Slavs in foreign countries like Germany, France and the United States. In 1907 they held a meeting at Prague, at which 23,000 of all nationalities attended (five hundred from America) and manœuvred in a manner which surprised the Austrian and Russian staff-officers who were present. In 1885, when Bulgaria threw off Russian tutelage, there was no native organization save the *Sokols*, which, however, numbered 40,000

men, all trained and disciplined, and largely helped to save the situation. The object of these *Sokols* is primarily anti-German—their basis is the homogeneity of the Slav race, the preservation of Slav languages and culture, and the stimulation of racial patriotism. They exhibit an amount of organizing and concentrating power at variance with the accepted character of the Slavs. A Russian, asked at Prague what his country could do if the *Sokols* were well developed there, replied: "She would have a constitutional government to-day." Naturally, these organizations are not smiled on by the officials in Russia, but a few exist. There are a large number in Galicia, which sent delegates to Prague. Alas! because the Russians came, the Poles remained away! The Emperor of Austria, out of deference to his German ally and his many German subjects, does not favor the *Sokol* movement and was not present at the Prague meeting. In that city—a German city to all intents and purposes less than half a century ago, the capital in the sixteenth century of the Germanic Roman Empire—the Slav reunion was held amidst scenes of the wildest enthusiasm and the most ardent patriotism. No word of German was heard, and at the national theatre a significant tableau was displayed which represented the *Sokols* releasing the spirit of the Slav from the fetters imposed by German influence.

To realize the true position to-day in this struggle between Slav and Teuton, one needs to comprehend the change which has come over German ambitions since the accession of William II and the dropping of "the old pilot." Bismarck's policy of controlling the destinies of Europe by an intricate system of alliances was not possible for the impetuous Kaiser, with his predilection for telegrams which blurt out diplomatic secrets. At one time he gave open countenance to the wildest schemes of the Pan-Germanic league, which aim at nothing less than a United States of Europe under Prussian hegemony. The growth of his country in wealth and power since her unification has given him boundless ambitions, and the necessity for an outlet both for trade and population has forced him to embark on a colonial policy. For the furtherance of this policy two things are necessary—a first-class fleet and an outlet on the Mediterranean—and in his efforts to secure these the Emperor is shaking Europe to its foundations, because the balance of power, once established by the Dual and Triple Alliances, is entirely disturbed by the growth of German strength and

ambitions. The great obstacle to the realization of the last is Great Britain, which both as to white men's colonies and the control of the Mediterranean, is right across the track. Accordingly, it is to a fight with Great Britain for the supremacy of the sea that William II presses. The naval expenditure has grown since 1898 from four to fourteen millions, sterling, and the Navy League, with its 900,000 members, does yeoman service in creating and fostering national enthusiasm. The Emperor William is able, at the same time, to keep France on the rack by his enormous military preparations. All the while, on the flanks of his empire, the Slav revival is steadily at work undermining the Teutonic domination which, at one time, appeared to be an accomplished fact in Central Europe. Austria, Germany's ally, is the scene of the most successful Slav revival; and Hungary, with its Magyar government which might well be a useful tool for Germany, is also torn by the claims of Slavs and Latins. The Baltic provinces of Russia have been purged of their German element, and the Polish provinces of Germany resist any attempt to Germanize them. Holland, Belgium and Denmark may be forced by economic considerations into the empire of Germany; but I noticed a deputation from Flanders and another from Luxembourg to the Slav demonstration at Prague, and the Dutch have held their own against overwhelming odds for too many centuries to be easily frightened. In some regions where the Teuton and Latin are in racial conflict the pendulum is swaying towards the latter. This is particularly noticeable in certain cantons of Switzerland, the Tyrol, and along the Trentino and the Adriatic coast. Bohemia is, of course, the classic example of what a Slav people can do, and it is only necessary to remember that the German language, once paramount, is now practically superseded by that most difficult tongue, the Czech, which had fallen into disuse except as an illiterate *patois*. It is abundantly evident that this check to Pan-German aspirations in Europe will merely stimulate German activity on the sea and towards colonial expansion; and, as Great Britain is her natural rival in these spheres, it is especially interesting to find that, in the last few years, the latter Power has descended from her pedestal of isolation, and has, by means of her *ententes* with France, Spain and Italy, and her convention with Russia respecting certain Asiatic questions, created a new political situation in which Germany is threatened with isolation.

As a contrast to the individualistic tendency among the European nations, we find, from beneath, a movement which is apparently international. Without going to the extreme with the international Socialists, it is not difficult to imagine that the democratic wave which is passing over Europe is likely to react on national rivalries. Germany, however, declared against this view, when at the last elections a Socialist majority voted to confirm the Imperialism of the Emperor. Great Britain is essentially democratic in her government, despite the King and the House of Lords; Italy, under a constitutional monarchy, is permeated with the most advanced Socialistic ideas, to which her aristocratic classes are yielding converts; Spain, on the surface Catholic and aristocratic, is a hotbed of anarchy and Socialism; Austria has granted the most liberal franchise in Europe; and the Magyars, essentially an aristocratic ruling body, are sitting on the safety-valve in Hungary. Servia and Bulgaria are peasant states; Sweden and Norway are the homes of an educated proletariat; Russia, as has been said already, is sowing the seeds of future liberty with the blood of martyrs. France alone, nominally republican, is essentially *bourgeois*, and despite the windy declarations of French Socialists she will remain so. As a result she is losing power and prestige, for, while autocracies and democracies may strive, your *bourgeois* state is too conservative to do anything but exist.

The question of the moment is whether, in this transformation scene now in progress, the forces from below or the forces from above will prevail. I call national patriotism "a force from above," because it is essentially something outside a man's ordinary ken. It animates him—why, he hardly knows—frequently to the detriment of his immediate personal comfort and welfare. Sometimes it seems dead against his economic existence, as in Bohemia and Hungary, where, both by the individual and by the state, poverty has been preferred to German patronage. The attempts at assimilation, as exhibited in the latest of "isms," internationalism, are founded on a conception of society and of statecraft which are still in the experimental stage. We do not yet know whether the Socialist ideal is realizable, or whether universal peace would be possible so long as terrestrial passions remain. On the other hand, the national revivals in Europe have stimulated literature and art, have quickened the pulse and fired the eyes of

millions of people, and have spurred them to achievement. Evils have come in their train, but they have not been the negative evils of sloth and indifference.

Here, then, is Europe, at the beginning of the twentieth century, full of life and vitality, seething with change, questioning everywhere as to the why and wherefore of things, instead of—as is the way of old age—accepting what seems to be inevitable. That perennial youthfulness in European blood which has given us, in the last half-century, a new Germany, a new Italy, Servia, Bulgaria, Roumania, and a new Norway and Sweden, will give us a new Russia. The age-long struggles, intellectual as well as political, will continue to be waged with renewed vigor, to the stimulation of endeavor and the generation of fresh ideas. New nations and new aspirations have been, and still are, fighting their way up and modifying the conditions of life even among the ruins of so many empires and societies.

No! Europe is not decadent, with so much young blood coursing in her veins. She is transforming herself afresh, and her future history will be as full of thrilling pages as her past.

ARCHIBALD R. COLQUHOUN.